



## Julie Gutfreund

Julie was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1931. Her father, an attorney, was from Tarnapol, Poland; her mother, from Vishnitz, Romania. The family was well-off and Julie was a self-admitted “spoiled only child.” The family owned a house and had both a maid and nanny for Julie. Julie attended kindergarten and then had a private tutor at home for first grade. However, all that changed in the spring of 1938 when Hitler entered Austria and Jews experienced changes in lifestyles. They were no longer permitted to go to the park or shop in certain stores. A great many restrictions were placed on them.

On Kristalnacht, Julie and her mother were home alone. The maid’s German boyfriend came to the house and banged incessantly at the door while Julie and her mother hid in the closet. Her father, meanwhile, had chosen to ride a streetcar all night. What he observed convinced him that the family needed to flee the area. The next morning he moved the family into the home of a Gentile friend and plans were made to leave. Because of the family’s wealth, they were able to give bribes of money and gold coins to consulates. However, Julie’s dad lost his position as lawyer at a bank for no reason other than he was Jewish.

Six months later, in the spring of 1939, the family received permission to go to Antwerp. Jews were not permitted to travel by train so they flew in a non-pressurized old plane, holding oxygen masks to their faces for the duration of the flight. Once in Belgium, they were aided by HIAS and Julie was placed in first grade. She should have been in second grade, but since she spoke neither French nor Flemish, she was behind in school.

Further plans were made, with a goal of going to Shanghai. However, Julie’s father knew a doctor in Chicago who was also from Tarnapol. Dr. Davidson provided papers for the family. However, since Jews could not get into the U.S., the family had to pretend to be farmers as there was a need for that. The trans-Atlantic trip was made on the Holland-American ship Penland. Although the two-week voyage experienced rough seas, Julie remembers being “happy, running all over.”

Again, HIAS aided the family, finding them an apartment on the lower East Side of New York. The adjustment was difficult for Julie and she was often sick, missing a great deal of school. In the spring of 1940, Dr. Davidson arranged for the family to move to Chicago, where Julie’s dad found work selling silk ties door to door. However, his accent had him pronouncing pure silk as poor silk and he did not find success in this position. He later became a bookkeeper for a tavern and attended school to become an accountant. It was in this capacity that he later worked for the Board of Education. Her mother, who had moved to Vienna to attend culinary school, became a cook in the Curtis Candy Company’s cafeteria. Julie found it difficult to transition to a new lifestyle in the U.S. However, she persevered, attending summer

school to make up for her lost second grade education. She later attended college and became a medical technician. She met her husband, also a survivor, on a blind date. They married in 1954 and had three children, one of whom lives in Phoenix.